

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

**MINUTES**

April 28, 1999

The Board of Education and the Board of Vocational Education met for the regular business meeting at the Best Western Cavalier Inn, Charlottesville, Virginia on Wednesday, April 28, 1999 with the following members present:

Mr. Kirk Schroder, President  
Senator J. Brandon Bell, Vice President  
Mrs. Jennifer C. Byler  
Mr. Mark C. Christie  
Mrs. Audrey B. Davidson

Mrs. Susan T. Noble  
Mr. Robert H. Patterson, Jr.  
Mrs. Ruby W. Rogers  
Senator John W. Russell

Mr. Paul D. Stapleton, Secretary  
and Superintendent of Public  
Instruction

Mr. Schroder called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

***INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE***

Senator Russell gave the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

***APPROVAL OF MINUTES***

Mrs. Rogers made a motion for approval of the minutes of the March 25 meeting. Copies of the minutes had been distributed previously to all members of the Board for review. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Byler and carried unanimously.

***APPROVAL OF AGENDA***

The following items were added to the agenda: A second item was added to *Item E: Resolution for Adoption of a SOL Test Experts Committee*. *Item J: Report from the Special Committee for the Review of Objectives for Personal Living and Finances*.

***CONSENT AGENDA***

The motion was made by Mrs. Byler, seconded by Mrs. Noble, and carried unanimously for approval of the consent agenda.

- P Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Release of Literary Fund Loans for Placement on Waiting List
- P Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Applications for Literary Fund Loans
- P Final Review of Financial Report on Literary Loan Fund

**Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Release of Literary Fund Loans for Placement on Waiting List**

The Department of Education's recommendation that funding for seven projects in the amount of \$35,420,000 be released and funding for four projects in the amount of \$26,200,000 be deferred and the projects be placed on the First Priority Waiting List was approved.

COUNTY, CITY OR TOWN	SCHOOL	AMOUNT
Buena Vista City	Buena Vista High School	\$7,500,000.00
Pulaski County	Critzer Elementary	2,500,000.00
Pulaski County	Snowville Elementary	5,000,000.00
Fluvanna County	Central Elementary	6,500,000.00
Suffolk City	Booker T. Washington Elementary	5,000,000.00
Virginia Beach City	W. T. Cooke Elementary	7,500,000.00
Hanover County	Atlee High	1,420,000.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$35,420,000.00</b>

**First Priority Waiting List**

COUNTY, CITY, OR TOWN	SCHOOL	AMOUNT
Stafford County	Amyclae Middle	\$7,500,000.00
Augusta County	New Churchville Elementary	5,000,000.00
Madison County	Waverly Yowell Elementary	6,200,000.00
Hopewell City	Patrick Copeland	7,500,000.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$26,200,000.00</b>

**Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Applications for Literary Fund Loans**

The Department of Education's recommendation to approve four new applications in the amount of \$26,200,000 subject to review and approval by the Office of the Attorney General pursuant to Section 22.1-156, *Code of Virginia* was approved.

COUNTY, CITY, OR TOWN	SCHOOL	AMOUNT
Stafford County	Amyclae Middle	\$7,500,000.00
Augusta County	New Churchville Elementary	5,000,000.00
Madison County	Waverly Yowell Elementary	6,200,000.00
Hopewell City	Patrick Copeland	7,500,000.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$26,200,000.00</b>

**Final Review of Financial Report on Literary Fund**

The Department of Education's recommendation to approve the financial report on the status of the Literary Fund as of January 31, 1999 was accepted by the Board of Education's vote on the consent agenda.

***DISCUSSION OF CURRENT ISSUES***

Mrs. Byler said that during the board's planning retreat last April she let everyone know that she was interested in school bus safety and wanted board members to know that the information will be coming to them in a few weeks.

Mr. Stapleton said that right now a major priority at the Department of Education is working with division superintendents on school safety. He said that while we could not guarantee that the episode that happened at Columbine High School in Colorado would not happen in Virginia, he wanted to assure the board members that every superintendent in the state is working very hard to do everything in their power to make schools safe.

***PUBLIC COMMENT***

The following persons spoke during the public comment period:

Catta	Nora Wilkens
Bruce Miller	Jean Shackelford
Helen Stevenson	Kathy Showalter

***ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS***

**Resolution of the Virginia Board of Education Establishing the Standards of Learning Technical Advisory Committee**

Mrs. Cam Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Reporting at the Department of Education, said the SOL Technical Advisory Committee will consist of a chairperson and four members appointed by the President of the Virginia Board of Education, drawn from a national pool of individuals with expertise in the psychometric characteristics of large-scale assessment, and with no conflict of interest related to the Virginia Standards of Learning testing program. These persons will serve for five-year terms subject to renewal by the President of the Board of Education. The committee will provide technical advice and assistance on test reliability and validity, item and test development, data analysis, scaling, equating, reporting, and other topics, as needed.

Mrs. Byler asked if the members of the committee could be appointed to a second five-year term or will there be a limit on the amount of time a person can serve.

Mr. Christie stated that the experts serving on the committee would be from out-of-state and will not have a conflict with Virginia Standards of Learning testing program.

Mrs. Rogers made a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christie and carried unanimously. The following is the text of the resolution as adopted by the Board of Education.

**Resolution of the Virginia Board of Education  
Establishing the Standards of Learning Technical Advisory Committee**

Whereas, the Virginia Board of Education recognizes and acknowledges the complex technical issues associated with the on-going development of the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests; and

Whereas, the Standards of Learning tests represent the instruments by which student acquisition of the skills and knowledge embodied in the Virginia Standards of Learning is evaluated; and

Whereas, information from the Standards of Learning tests is used for student remediation, school accreditation, and various locally determined purposes; and

Whereas, the SOL tests must be continually reviewed with respect to their technical merit and psychometric foundation;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Virginia Board of Education shall establish a Standards of Learning (SOL) Technical Advisory Committee.

Be It Further Resolved that the SOL Technical Advisory Committee shall:

1. Consist of a Chairperson and four members appointed by the President of the Virginia Board of Education, drawn from a national pool of individuals with expertise in the psychometric characteristics of large-scale assessments, and with no conflict of interest related to the Virginia Standards of Learning testing program.
2. Be appointed for a five-year term subject to renewal by the President of the Board of Education.
3. Provide technical advice and assistance on test reliability and validity, item and tests development, data analysis, scaling, equating, reporting, and other topics, as needed.

Be it Finally Resolved that the SOL Technical Advisory Committee shall present its findings to the Virginia Board of Education via its President and shall operate according to a Memorandum of Understanding developed by the Board of Education.

Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education in Charlottesville, Virginia  
This Twenty-eighth Day of April 1999.

Witness These Signatures:

Kirk T. Schroder, President

Paul D. Stapleton, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Resolution Concerning the SOL Assessment Advisory Committee: Guidelines for Operation**

Mr. Schroder presented a resolution concerning the guidelines for operation of the SOL Assessment Advisory Committee. Mr. Schroder explained that on October 28, 1998, the Virginia Board of Education authorized its President to establish and appoint an advisory committee to convene and give advice and recommendations, from time to time, to the Board concerning the implementation and operation of the Standards of Learning Testing Program. The committee shall consist of twenty-one members and two committee co-chairmen. Every appointment to the committee shall be for a term of three years and cannot be appointed to more than two consecutive three-year terms.

Mr. Patterson made a motion to adopt the Resolution of the Virginia Board of Education for the Establishment and Operation of the Standards of Learning Test Advisory Committee, as presented by Mr. Schroder. The motion was seconded by Senator Russell and carried unanimously.

Mr. Schroder appointed Mrs. Jennifer Byler, a member of the Board of Education and Dr. Mark Edwards, Superintendent of Henrico County Public Schools, as co-chairs of the Standards of Learning Test Advisory Committee. Mr. Schroder said that Cam Harris' staff will be providing staff support to this committee.

Mrs. Byler said she is honored to be appointed as co-chair of the Standards of Learning Test Advisory Committee. She said that Virginia has one of the most aggressive and ambitious educational reform plans in the entire United States. The success of this program depends on the cooperation of every facet of the educational system from the home to the administrators, the Board of Education, the Governor, and the General Assembly. Mrs. Byler said it will be her goal to make this process as open as possible so that everybody is heard. She said we may rarely agree with each other on everything, but we want everybody to be heard and examine every issue to be sure we are being as fair as possible to every child in the Commonwealth and assure they receive the education they deserve and the tax payers are paying for.

Dr. Edwards said he is honored to serve as co-chair of the Standards of Learning Test Advisory Committee and looks forward to working with Mrs. Byler. He believes that this approach represents the disposition of the board president and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and has established a beginning in terms of doing everything possible to make this program work. The listening, responding, and understanding, in terms of 'if we all pull together, we can make this work' and will establish the finest program of its kind in the United States.

The following is the text of the resolution as adopted by the Board of Education.

**Resolution of the Virginia Board of Education  
For The  
Establishment And Operation Of The  
Standards of Learning Test Advisory Committee**

**RECITALS**

WHEREAS, on October 28, 1998, the Virginia Board of Education (the "Board") authorized its President to establish and appoint an advisory committee to convene and give advice and recommendations, from time to time, to the Board concerning the implementation and operation of the Standards of Learning Testing Program (the "Program"); and

WHEREAS, the President of the Board hereby presents this Resolution for the Board's consideration in order to establish a standing committee of the Board entitled the STANDARDS OF LEARNING TEST ADVISORY COMMITTEE (the "Committee") to meet and operate within the scope of its authority and duties stated below.

**ARTICLE ONE: PURPOSE**

The Committee is hereby established as a standing committee of the Board for the sole purpose of advising and making recommendations to the Board on ways and means of improving the Program, from time to time, as the Committee deems appropriate. Subject to the terms and conditions of this Resolution, the Committee shall have the authority to review all procedures and operations of the Program. The Committee Co-Chairmen will present all recommendations to the Board at appropriate times during regular meetings of the Board. In addition, the Committee shall file an annual report to the Board. The Board has also established an advisory panel of test experts ("Test Experts Committee") to collect psychometric reliability and validity data from each test administration of the Program and to advise the Board on all matters concerning professional testing data from the Program. As such, the Committee will not have the authority to conduct, advise or otherwise act on matters pertaining to the Program's reliability and validity test data and instead, shall refer all such matters to the Test Experts Committee. Also, there are currently in existence, content review committees, comprised of teachers, educators and testing experts, to review all matters concerning the content of the tests offered in the Program. As such, the Committee shall not act on matters of content, but shall refer all such matters to the applicable content review committee with such information and comment as it deems appropriate. The Committee agrees that it will act only within the scope of authority expressly stated in this Resolution. All Committee members acknowledge, by virtue of their service on the Committee, that their authority with respect to the SOL testing process is limited to the matters expressly stated in Article 1 of this Resolution. All Committee members also acknowledge, by virtue of their service on the Committee, their basic support for the Program and commitment to making the Program as productive and successful as possible.

**ARTICLE TWO: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. Composition.** The Committee shall consist of twenty-one (21) members and two Committee Co-Chairmen. All initial members of the Committee and the Committee Co-Chairmen shall be appointed by the President of the Board and thereafter, all subsequent vacancies and appointments shall be made by the Board.

**Section 2. Term of Membership.** Every appointment to the Committee shall be for a term of three years, except that the initial appointments shall be established in three equal groups of members with an initial term of one year, two years and three years respectively in order to establish three separate classes of members with varied terms. No member of the Board shall be appointed to more than two consecutive three-year terms. Any member of the Committee may be removed by the Board, at any time, with or without cause.

### ARTICLE THREE: MEETINGS

**Section 1. Regular Meetings.** The Committee shall adopt a tentative schedule for regular meetings for each applicable calendar year. Such schedule shall be subject to the change, alteration or adjustment by the Co-Chairmen, as they deem appropriate; to accommodate the operation of the Committee as is necessary.

**Section 2. Special Meetings.** A special meeting of members may be called by the Co-Chairmen in their sole discretion or upon the written request to the Co-Chairmen by eight or more members of the Committee. No business other than that specified in the notice of the meeting shall be transacted at any special meeting of the Committee.

**Section 3. Place of Meetings.** All meetings of the Committee shall be held Richmond, Virginia, in order to accommodate the accessibility of data and information from the Virginia Department of Education.

**Section 4. Adjournment.** Any duly called meeting of the Committee may be adjourned to a later time and place, determined by the Committee members present at such meeting, whether such members constitute a quorum for transaction of business, provided that such time and place are announced at the meeting, and no other notice of the adjourned meeting shall be required.

**Section 5. Voting Proxies.** At meetings of the Committee, all members present shall be entitled to exercise voting rights on all matters. Members not present at a meeting shall not be entitled to vote by proxy.

**Section 6. Notices of Meetings.** Written notice stating the place, day and hour of any meeting of the members, and, in case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be given not less than 10 days before the date of the meeting by or at the direction of the Co-Chairmen. A notice shall be deemed duly given to a Committee member when it is: (1) adopted by the Committee as part of its tentative regular meeting schedule and is not subsequently changed or altered or (2) delivered in person or mailed, postage-prepaid, to the address of such Committee member as it appears on the records of the Committee or (3) when it is sent via telecopier or electronic mail transmission to the telecopier number or electronic mail address of such Committee member, and the sender has received a confirmation message that such transmission has been received.

**Section 7. Voting and Quorum.** Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to one vote with respect to each matter voted on by the Committee. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Except as expressly provided otherwise in this Resolution, the vote of a majority of the Committee members present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Committee.

**Section 8. Conflict of Interest.** In any case where a member shall have a personal interest in a particular vote of the Committee, such member(s) shall excuse themselves from the vote of the Committee thereon.

**Section 9. Waiver.** Whenever any notice is required to be given under the provisions of law or this Resolution, a written waiver thereof, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice and filed with the records of the meeting, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be conclusively deemed to be equivalent to such notice. In addition, any member who attends a meeting of the Committee without protesting at the commencement of the meeting such lack of notice shall be conclusively deemed to have waived notice of such meeting.

### ARTICLE FOUR: EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

The Committee may decide to go into executive session at any of its meetings in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Prior to meeting in an executive session, the Committee must adopt a motion to go into executive session. The Committee shall discuss only matters in an executive session as specified by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act or other applicable law. The Committee may take no final action on any item in executive session. At the conclusion of any executive session, the Committee must reconvene in public session and take a vote of the membership to come out of executive session.

**ARTICLE FIVE:  
PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEE  
MEETINGS**

All proceeding of the Committee meetings shall be as prescribed by Roberts Rules of Order.

**ARTICLE SIX: AGENDA FOR MEETING**

The Committee will have a published agenda for all regularly scheduled public meetings as set forth by the Committee Co-Chairmen.

**ARTICLE SEVEN:  
COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRMEN**

**Section 1. Committee Co-Chairmen.** The initial Co-Chairmen of the Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Board and thereafter, upon any expiration of term or vacancy of such positions, by the Board. It is the intent of the Board to have one Co-Chairman be an active professional educator in the Commonwealth and the other Co-Chairman be a present or past member of the Board or any other citizen of the Commonwealth. The Co-Chairmen shall each have individual voting rights on all matters before the Committee. However, the Co-Chairmen shall act in unanimous agreement and consent on all matters in the execution and carrying out of their joint office. No Co-Chairman can act on any matter pertaining to this joint office without the consent of the other Co-Chairman. The Co-Chairmen shall preside over meetings of the Committee and shall have all powers and duties as necessary to fulfill the role of chief executive of the Committee and its presiding officer and as may be, from time to time, conferred or prescribed by the Committee. The Co-Chairmen shall exercise supervision and direction over the Committee's goals and affairs and discharge all duties generally pertaining to such joint office as the Executive head of an organization of this character subject to the control of the Committee members.

**Section 2. Other Officers.** Additional officers may, in the discretion of the Committee, be elected from time to time to perform such duties and undertake such functions as designated by the Committee.

**ARTICLE EIGHT:  
COMMITTEE OPERATIONS**

**Section 1. Official Papers.** All official records of the Committee shall be kept on file in the Department of Education and shall be open to inspection.

**Section 2. Test Security.** The Committee and it members, at all times, shall conduct the highest standard of operation with respect the maintenance of all test security and other matters of a sensitive or proprietary nature with respect to all aspects of the Program.

**Section 3. Superintendent of Public Instruction.** The Superintendent of Public Instruction is hereby directed to provide all necessary staff support to the Committee in order to fulfill its duties herein.

**ARTICLE NINE: AMENDMENTS**

This Resolution may be altered, amended or repealed only by the Board after a first and final review has been completed in two separate meetings. The preceding requirement of a first and final review in two separate meetings may not be waived by the Board, unless such waiver is approved by every member of the Board.

**ARTICLE TEN: MISCELLANEOUS**

**Section 1. Addresses.** The addresses and/or telephone numbers used in any notice given under this Resolution shall be those appearing on the books of the Committee, and it shall be the individual member's responsibility to insure that the Virginia Department of Education has the correct address.

**Section 2. Roberts Rules.** Except as otherwise stated herein, all meetings of the Committee shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.



**Section 3. Gender.** All personal pronouns used in this Resolution, whether used in the masculine, feminine, or neuter gender, shall include all other genders, the singular shall include the plural, and vice versa, as the context may require.

**Section 4. Copy to All Members.** The Board hereby directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide all Committee members with current copy of these Bylaws and all amendments thereto.

The undersigned, being the duly elected President of the Virginia Board of Education, hereby certifies that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by its members as of the date and signature below.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, Virginia Board of Education

Acknowledged by  
Initial Committee Co-Chairmen:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

After the Resolution was signed by the Board President and Co-chairs, Senator Bell asked for additional information on the boundary line for the Advisory Committee as far as reviewing the SOLs and giving feedback to the Board. Mr. Schroder referred him to the purpose of the committee as stated in the Resolution.

### **First Review of Requests for Increased Graduation Requirements**

The Standards of Quality for Public Schools (SOQ) in '22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia* require local school boards to “. . . award diplomas to all secondary school students who earn the units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education, pass the prescribed literacy tests and meet such other requirements as may be prescribed by the local school board and approved by the Board of Education.” In addition, the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* adopted on September 4, 1997, includes a provision that requires Board of Education approval of all additional requirements above those prescribed in the standards. Those standards further stipulate that local school boards that had increased requirements in effect as of June 30, 1997 would be granted approval through June 30, 1999.

Mr. Charles Finley, Director of Accreditation at the Department of Education, informed the Board that the school boards of Alexandria City and King George County have submitted requests for additional requirements for graduation. These requests have been reviewed and found to be consistent with the Board's *Guidance Document Re: Requests for Additional Graduation Credit Requirements and Requests to Allocate Electives from Local School Boards*, adopted June 25, 1998.

Mr. Christie made a motion to waive first review. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Noble and carried unanimously.

The Alexandria City School Board is requesting an additional unit of credit in History and Social Science by reallocating an elective credit that will reduce the number of available electives to five for the Standard Diploma.

The King George School Board is requesting an increase of four units of credit from 24 to require 28 units of credit to include the following for the Advanced Studies Diploma: One additional unit of English to be selected from among Drama, Speech or Journalism; one additional unit of credit in mathematics to be above the level of Algebra II or in computer science; and two additional electives to be selected from among English, mathematics, science, history/social sciences, foreign languages, fine arts, or practical arts.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve both requests from Alexandria City and King George County. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Noble and carried unanimously.

**First Review of a Requests for Approval of an Experimental or Innovative Program Involving Opening Prior to Labor Day**

Mr. Schroder abstained from this issue because his law firm has provided legal counsel to the Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association. Mr. Christie and Mr. Patterson also abstained for similar reasons. Senator Bell presided on this issue.

On March 8, 1999 the York County School Board voted to seek approval of an innovative program that would provide an extended-year program at Magruder Elementary School and Yorktown Elementary Schools to help students be successful with SOL testing. The program will serve sixty students in grades 2, 3, 4, and 5 at each school and is voluntary. The program will begin August 2, 1999 and will conclude June 30, 2000 (the 1999-2000 school year).

Senator Russell made a motion to waive first review. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Noble and carried unanimously. A brief discussion was held on how to define an innovative program and a brief overview of the school divisions that have received previous approval for innovative programs.

Mrs. Byler made a motion to approve the program and Pre-Labor Day waiver. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Noble and carried unanimously.

**First Review of Non-Verified SOL Revision Process**

Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction at the Department of Education, presented the *Virginia Standards of Learning for Art, Theatre, Music, Foreign Language, Health, Physical Education, and Driver Education* to Board members.

A lengthy discussion was held on who would be involved in the writing team, identifying the content specific specialists, who are stakeholders, and who will serve as consultant.

Senator Russell made a motion to waive first review. The motion was seconded by Senator Bell and carried unanimously.

Mr. Christie made a motion to grant approval for the Department of Education to proceed with the revision process for the Standards of Learning for art, foreign language, music, theatre, health, physical education, and driver education in two phases. The motion was seconded by Senator Bell and carried unanimously.

**Report on Activity of the General Assembly at the Reconvened Session on April 7<sup>th</sup>**

The 1999 General Assembly Session began on January 13<sup>th</sup> and concluded on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Last month, the Board received a draft document outlining the K-12 education bills that had been enrolled. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, the General Assembly reconvened to address the Governor's amendments and vetoes.

Mrs. Diane Atkinson, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Public Affairs at the Department of Education reviewed with board members the K-12 education bills that were either amended or vetoed by the Governor and identified the responding General Assembly action.

Mrs. Noble said it was her understanding that Part 12 on HB 2710 and SB 1125 required mentor teachers for probationary teachers. Mrs. Atkinson explained that, in 1998-99, \$500,000 was appropriated for mentor teachers and for 1999-2000, \$700,000 was appropriated for mentor teachers. Dan Timberlake, Assistant Superintendent for Accounting and Finance at the Department, said that for 1999-2000 an additional \$300,000 was appropriated to increase the number of mentor teacher programs across the state and assist school divisions with provisions of HB 2710.

Mrs. Noble said her concern is how to get an outstanding program for some teachers to become a program for every teacher in the state. Mrs. Atkinson indicated that HB 2710 creates a requirement for local school boards to provide a mentor teacher for each probationary teacher, except probationary teachers who have had successful teaching experiences.

Mrs. Noble said she would like to see the task force established two years ago to study mentor teacher programs. She stated that she wished to see a statewide mentor teacher program for every new teacher. Mrs. Noble also asked if the Department of Education could provide the funds to continue the work of the task force. Mr. Timberlake indicated that the money appropriated to the Department of Education is not for use by the Department but has already been allocated for school divisions.

Mr. Schroder said that if the General Assembly did not continue the task force the Board of Education does not have the authority to continue it without their legislative act. Mrs. Atkinson will let the Board know what action was made by the General Assembly. The Board accepted the report.

### **Report from Committee on Objectives for Personal Living and Finances**

The committee consisted of Mrs. Davidson as Chairperson, Mrs. Byler, and Senator Bell. Mrs. Davidson said that to simplify things for teachers the committee made five categories with objectives under each. The committee made sure that everything the General Assembly mandated was included in the objectives. Two categories that were not mandated by the General Assembly but included in the objectives were: (1) *Prepare and Balance a Personal/Family Budget*, and (2) *Examine and Compare Various Savings Options*.

Mrs. Davidson made a motion to adopt the Objectives for Personal Living and Finances. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Noble and carried unanimously.

#### **Objectives for Personal Living and Finances**

**Validated by Panel of Virginia Mathematics Teachers  
October 22, 1998**

These Objectives are based on topics specifically cited in ' 22.1-253.13:1.B of the *Code of Virginia*.

#### **Compute and Understand Taxes**

- ♦ Investigate the implications of an inheritance.
- ♦ Compute state and federal taxes.
- ♦ Verify local tax assessments.

#### **Prepare and Balance a Personal/Family Budget**

- ♦ Judge the quality of a bank's services to open a bank account.
- ♦ Balance a checkbook.
- ♦ Investigate the basics of personal insurance policies.

#### **Manage Debt, Including Retail and Credit Card Debt**

- ♦ Complete a loan application.
- ♦ Compute (simple and compound) interest rates by various mechanisms.

#### **Examine and Compare Various Savings Options**

- ♦ Compute (simple and compound) interest rates by various mechanisms.

#### **Identify Consumer Rights and Responsibilities**

- ♦ Communicate with salespersons and merchants.
- ♦ Analyze simple contracts.
- ♦ Contest an incorrect bill.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Schroder adjourned the meeting of the Virginia Board of Education and the Board of Vocational Education at 4:15 p.m. Mr. Schroder announced that the Board would reconvene at 9:00 a.m. the following morning for its annual planning retreat.

***MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE VIRGINIA SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND FOUNDATION***

The Board of Education and the Board of Vocational Education adjourned and Mr. Christie, President of the Foundation of the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, convened the meeting of The Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind Foundation at 4:16 p.m.

Mr. Christie conducted business of the Foundation, including election of officers. Mr. Christie was re-elected president and Mrs. Noble was re-elected vice president. Mr. Christie proceeded with the meeting as noted on the agenda, as follows.

- ☐ Approval of Minutes
- ☐ Approval of Agenda
- ☐ Board Action
  - Election of Officers
  - Fiscal Report
  - Distribution of Earnings
- ☐ Board Discussion
  - Report on the Audit as of December 31, 1997

The meeting of the Foundation of the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Planning Retreat

**MINUTES**

April 29, 1999

The Board of Education reconvened at 9:00 a.m. in The Commonwealth Room at Newcomb Hall on the Grounds of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia on Thursday, April 29, 1999 with the following members present:

Mr. Kirk Schroder, President  
Senator J. Brandon Bell, Vice President  
Mrs. Jennifer C. Byler  
Mr. Mark C. Christie  
Mrs. Audrey B. Davidson

Mrs. Susan T. Noble  
Mr. Robert H. Patterson, Jr.  
Mrs. Ruby W. Rogers  
Senator John W. Russell

Mr. Paul D. Stapleton, Secretary  
and Superintendent of Public  
Instruction

Mr. Schroder called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT***

Mr. Schroder acknowledged Dean Robert Pate, Assistant Dean, Curry School of Education. Dean Pate stated that they are happy to have the State Board of Education meeting at the University in Charlottesville.

***DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS THAT ACHIEVE, OR FAIL TO ACHIEVE, EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT***

**Out-of State Participants:**

Mark Musick, President, Southern Regional Education Board  
Christopher T. Cross, President, Council on Basic Education and  
Former President, Maryland Board of Education  
Jack Christie, Former Chairman, Texas Board of Education  
Al Foster, Director of Intervention, Chicago Public Schools  
Elsie Leak, Director of the Division of School Improvement,  
North Carolina Department of Education  
Gary Huggins, Executive Director, Education Leaders Council

### **Opening Comments from Mr. Schroder**

- The purpose of today's meeting is to give the Board of Education members the opportunity to listen, learn, and reflect on the decisions that the Board will consider over the next twelve months. The format for the meeting centers around the comments of the out-of-state participants about their experiences in dealing with similar issues in their states and across the country.
- The specific topics for the day center around the Standards of Accreditation and the issues of rewards, incentives, and consequences in terms of accountability.
- Virginia is involved in a sweeping reform effort centered on the Standards of Learning and the Standards of Accreditation. We are implemented the largest assessment program that Virginia has ever had, and the Board has many important decisions pending for the next twelve months in terms of implementing this program.
- The Board is in the initial stage now of looking at the issue of rewards and incentives. In May, the Board will hold a series of six public hearing across the state and by sometime this summer, the Board hopes to have a formal proposal. Another round of public hearings will be held at that point. The process will be on-going for at least the next twelve to eighteen months, during which the Board will be involved in extensive dialogue with teachers, parents, and the public. Thus, the Board is at the beginning of a long journey as it moves forward.

### **Comments from Mark Musick, President Southern Regional Education Board**

Mr. Musick offers his experience as President of the Southern Regional Education Board, the nation's first interstate compact for education composed of 15 member states. Members of SREB include the governor of each state, legislators, educators, and other citizen leaders.

### **Accountability: Keeping on Track**

- Virginia's standards are "dead on center" and stand up against any standards adopted by other states
  - Tests- sound, reliable, valid, "will hold up in court;" traditional, multiple choice approach may need to be re-evaluated in a decade
  - Time- reasonable amount of time for implementation
  - Assistance Centers- on track, will need to offer more assistance
  - Advisory Committee- excellent

- Testing Expert Panel- need this, need persons from around state and other states for psychometric advice
- 98% Problem- public perceives the standards are unrealistic, unreasonable, unattainable- he does not share this opinion
- Actual 98% Problem will occur in 2006-2007 when 98% of schools do meet standards but NAPE and SAT Scores remain low, large numbers of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders still do not read well enough, and businesses are not satisfied with high school student's preparation...THEN WHAT?
- Florida example:
  - 4 years ago- identified approx. 200 low performing schools
  - Didn't change standards or rules
  - Today- 4 out of 3,000 low performing schools
  - Next year they are changing standards and there may be hundreds of low performing schools again
- This does not mean Virginia's Standards are too low- Because tests perceived as "high stakes" achievement will move up more quickly than other states
- Do we conclude the process is meaningless? No. Means Virginia is about continuous school improvement, periodic evaluations of standards, and raising standards.
- High numbers of low performing schools may be negatively perceived but when only a few low performing schools there will still be a problem because public will still feels that their schools are not fine and are low performing even if not labeled as such-either way it is difficult.
- Will need mid-course corrections- no state has "gotten it right" yet
- Corrections do not mean you are lowering standards or backing away from accountability
- Right changes keep you on track. Be cautious and slow to make changes.
  - Texas very appropriately reported the scores for all students by sub-groups; Black, Hispanic, White, and Low Income. Powerful idea communicates that you can't leave anyone behind.
  - Names, Labels, Categories important as well as the number of them. Throughout states the following have been used: In Decline, In Crisis, Seriously



Impaired, Academic Watch, Academic Alert, High Challenge, (A,B,C,D,F), Low Performing, Designated Low Performing, Reconstitution Eligible, Fully Accredited, Accredited with Warning, Unaccredited, Provisionally Accredited, Exemplary, Recognized, At Risk, Adequate Reconstituted, Probation, (Gold Silver, Bronze)

- Most states have enough categories to spur all schools on to improvement- having only two categories needs to be examined. What happens when more than half of schools are in the highest category? How will you encourage them to further achievement?
- Labeling schools not enough- many states choose assistance centers or reward outstanding schools with dollars or greater flexibility. They look for ways to assist the schools
  - Negative labels are strong incentives but will not save/ help all schools- some need more- will know which schools these are in 2-3 years
- SREB- identifies 5 related parts that must be linked, aligned, worked on at the same time
  - Content and student performance standards- "pretty good shape"
  - Testing- "pretty good shape"
  - Professional Development- "link testing and performance standard so help teachers"
  - Accountability Reporting- "addressing today"
  - Reward Sanctions and Targeted Assistance- SRED argues all 5 parts must be linked and work together"
- Resources (money)- Big state numbers look better than when look at per student numbers- Texas -divide numbers for a big state still look pretty good because provide enough money to have programs that actually help students
- Virginia only state using accredited/unaccredited in state accountability system- other states will not use these because is a known quantity and has such a public perception

**Comments from Christopher Cross, President  
Council for Basic Education and  
Former President of the Maryland Board of Education**

Mr. Cross brings experience from the Maryland Board of Education as well as from his position with the Council for Basic Education, which has worked in 15 states on reform.

*Dealing with the reality of putting reform into place: it differs than it looks on paper. Issues and actions that the BOE should consider during this reform effort:*

- Be clear about the objective of the reform and articulate it.
- Desegregate the data from the testing to study performance patterns.
  - Determine if we are meeting the needs of poor and minority students—bringing people up from the bottom. In large part, this is what the reform is about.
  - Determine if the highest performing students are being challenged. If the parents of high-performing students do not believe that the curriculum being taught is challenging or is a lowering of standards, they can undercut your efforts to reform.
  - Suggestion: In addition to the 70 percent proficient level, identify a higher level of achievement for another level of recognition.
- Identify intermediate goals.
  - Every school needs to be measured against its own baseline of performance. The concept of “value added” is particularly important during the transition period.
  - Suggestion: Consider developing intermediate steps for reaching the accreditation goal so this is not a “yes or no” approach.
- Identify a time line and consider raising goals over a period of time. Recognize that it takes time to put curriculum in place.
- Consider an alternative route for students to obtain verified credits. If the focus is on achievement, why not have alternatives that also meet the standard of high quality? For example, if a student scores high on an Advanced Placement exam, isn’t that sufficient to meet the requirement for demonstrating high achievement?
- Provide the support components: teacher training and curriculum. Phasing these in is the toughest going of anything you face—and the most expensive.
- Be clear about the consequences of losing accreditation.
  - What does loss of accreditation mean to a middle or elementary school?
  - Are you going to have a system for reconstituting a school?
- Develop a system of review of the standards.
  - Are standards on a regular cycle for review?

- Are you benchmarking against standards from other states and other countries?
- Offer principals training in the analysis of data.
- Require school plans, both for the short term (first year) and for the long term (five years).
- Consider giving schools the ability to have zero-based staffing.
- Obtain financial resources to facilitate improvement, especially for staff development.
- Utilize technical advisors. Can the universities help with this role?
- Have a set of providers available for those situations where the school doesn't improve over time. You do not want DOE to run a school. Consider a competition for choosing providers.
- Have an exit plan—a way to leave after going in to assist in school improvement.
- Consider obtaining the authority for the BOE to close a failing school. This will work in some settings, such as urban areas where educational alternatives are available.
- Provide open enrollment within the district (and perhaps to private schools) for any student attending a failing school.
- Reach an agreement with your teacher organizations and develop a plan for working with them.
- Support principals as academic leaders, creating peer networks that allow principals to discuss problems without putting them in an embarrassing situation.
- Create a strong communications plan.
  - Consider how to inform and share with the press ahead of events.
  - Provide information to school board members to help them know how to present information to the public.
  - Bring your strongest critics in to help you solve problems.

**Comments from Dr. Jack Christie**  
**Former Chairman, Texas Board of Education**

Dr. Christie is a chiropractor in private practice and has served as a member and chairman of the Texas Board of Education, after having been elected to several terms on his local school board. In addition, Dr. Christie has been active in community and civic affairs.

- The process Texas used to adopt its statewide standards was similar in many respects to the way Virginia worked to adopt its Standards of Learning. Goals were also similar.
- Texas underwent a three-year development and adoption process. All segments of community were involved in this very complicated and inclusive process.
- The “Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills” (skills and knowledge seen as essential for students to be able to compete in tomorrow’s world—internationally, not just U.S.) involved gathering and summarizing input from thousands of citizens—present document is 1,400 pages long.
- “Texas Assessment of Essential Skills” (TAES) is a criterion-referenced test given in Texas.
- Must keep focused on what is best for children.
- Have four categories of school recognition (rewards): Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, and Academically Unacceptable.
- Rewards: Texas Successful Schools Program: state-funded monetary recognition that goes to schools in exemplary category. Only small amount (\$500- \$1,000 per school) and can be used to purchase instructional materials; cannot be used for pay bonuses. Main reward for schools is the community praise/pride the improving schools receive. Need to emphasize this much more in our communities.
- Consequences: Schools feel embarrassment if they are categorized as unacceptable; not to have to feel this embarrassment is a big incentive to do well. Failing schools receive visits from review teams that review a range of school data, including dropout rate, absenteeism, exemptions from tests, complaints from citizens and local businesses, parent involvement, financial practices of school and district, excessive referrals to alternative education programs, civil rights violations, any complaints of cheating on tests.
- Incremental approach to higher standards: look for improvement each year in student performance on tests. If a school does not meet expectations for three consecutive years, an intervention team is sent to the school to help. A monitor is also placed in the school. Then a management team is sent in to direct the educational program.
- Reconstitution is the last step when all other interventions fail. One school in Texas has been reconstituted under this program. Such schools may lose accreditation.
- Texas requires all students to pass Algebra in high school. Initial TASS tests scores were abysmal in Texas; have since improved greatly.

- Teachers in failing schools: Staff development for teachers and principals is absolutely essential. The role of the principal is key to success; strong principal can turn a failing school around. Positive attitude is very important to success.
- Use of technology for testing: great help to teachers; gives almost instant feedback.
- ESL students/ non-English speaking students: big challenge; give students three years before they are tested with the TAES test in English; during the three-year period, students take a TAES test in their native language.
- Special Education students: not presently in the TAES program; this is changing because the parents want their children in the testing program.

**Comments from Al Foster, Director of Intervention  
Chicago Public Schools**

Mr. Foster brings more than 20 years' experience as a teacher, principal, and administrator. Mr. Foster is responsible for implementing one of the most comprehensive school reform efforts in the country.

- **Chicago's experience was very different from Virginia's.** Chicago's public schools have long been troubled with labor unrest, insufficient funding, and students who perform inadequately. The impetus for change in Chicago's public schools came when the mayor took control of the public schools in 1995. The mayor was given the authority to appoint all members of the Board of Education, as well as the Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for day-to-day operations. There was no time for long-term planning and strategizing when Chicago's reform began. Immediate steps had to be taken to improve education, including aligning the curriculum, ensuring that the schools are safe, ending social promotion, setting standards, and reducing the dropout rate and incidents of crime.
- **All schools, regardless of performance, to develop school improvement plans designed to improve student performance in reading and math. All schools, even those doing well, were required to show improvement.** A system of accountability was developed, which categorized schools based on student performance, using baseline data that the schools supplied, and intervened when schools were having difficulty. In determining which were the non-performing schools, the primary factor is student performance, as measured by a standardized test. Students were tested, using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for elementary schools and Tests of Academic Proficiency for high schools. Although Chicago is using standardized tests as a baseline to determine performance, it is moving to criterion-referenced tests.
- **The standard for probation was set very low.** Schools were placed on probation when less than 15 percent of its students were able to read at a level at or above national norms, as measured by a standardized test. The standard was deliberately set low to ensure that there would be resources to support a program of school improvement.

- **The school improvement program was based on what the schools could control.** Although schools were not performing for a variety of reasons beyond their control – socio-economic factors, mobility, high truancy rates, large numbers of students in special education, buildings in poor repair – there are other factors that are within their control. These include the principal's role as leader, staff preparation, and administrative responsibilities that take away from the principal's time and reduce effectiveness.
- **The school improvement program emphasizes strong leadership by the principal and comprehensive teacher preparation and training.** Each school on probation was assigned a probation manager, who is a proven leader as a principal or administrator, with a good track record. The probation manager works with the school for a year consulting, mentoring, reviewing, and monitoring to help the school achieve the improvements in its plan. Each school is also assigned a business manager to focus on the operational and financial aspects of the school, which allows the principal to focus on leadership. The schools also developed a comprehensive plan of improving instruction, and aligned themselves with educational consortia and universities that had offered, through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, to provide professional development and training.
- **The Board of Trustees can reconstitute a failing school.** The Board of Trustees, appointed by the mayor, has significant powers. They can hold hearings about a principal's leadership and can remove the principal. Each school has an elected school council (essentially a school board), which selects the principal and has budgetary approval authority. However, the Board of Trustees can remove a local school council that is negligent, and can reconstitute a failing school. This requires all school employees, from principal to janitor, to re-apply for their jobs. Thus far, seven high schools have been reconstituted. The probation manager is authorized to hire the principal, and the principal is authorized to hire all other staff. The new staff is a mix of new and veteran teachers; although some good teachers look on it as a challenge to work in a reconstituted school, it can be difficult to find good teachers.
  - Employees not chosen when they re-apply for their jobs are not employed at that site. They are put into a reserve pool and are permitted to apply for other vacancies. In addition, they can serve as a substitute teacher for up to 24 months while looking for a new job. If they are not hired for a permanent position, at the end of 24 months they are no longer employed.
  - If reconstituting does not improve the school, it can be closed. No school has yet been closed, but one school is being considered for closure. The plan is that there will be no freshman class – the students will be assigned to other schools – and the school will be closed by attrition.
  - The results of reconstituting have been mixed. Of the seven schools that have been reconstituted, three have shown significant progress, but the others have not. If other schools are reconstituted, it will be done at a slower pace and not as many schools will

be done at once. There was little public outcry about the reconstituted schools, as they had done such a poor job of preparing students.

- **Improvement and intervention strategies are costly.** The reform efforts have eliminated social promotion, which requires intervention for the students not promoted to the next grade. The intervention requires additional funding extra classes, after school programs, summer school, and tutoring. The crackdown on crime has resulted in increased number of suspended and expelled students. Funding is needed for alternative placements for these students, so that they can continue their education setting. The school improvement plans call for comprehensive professional development and training to improve performance, which is also costly. The amount of instructional time has also increased; most schools stay open until 6:00 p.m., and serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner. In addition, many buildings are deteriorating and must be repaired.
- **Chicago is beginning to see improvement in all areas of student achievement.** They determine success by reviewing:
  - The increased percentage of students scoring at or above national norms on state tests and standardized tests;
  - The increased academic performance of all schools;
  - The average daily student attendance;
  - The decreased dropout rates;
  - The increased high school graduation rate;
  - The increased number of high school graduates who pursue higher education and the number employed after graduation; and
  - The decreased incidence of crime.
- The dropout is beginning to decrease because the students are better prepared and there are better programs to help them. Many dropouts had remained on the school rolls after dropping out, because of inaccurate record keeping. There is also a system-wide mandate to reduce crime, which resulted in increased suspensions and expulsions. All high schools are mandated to have metal detectors now, and all students are scanned. Since that was instituted, there have been no shootings, and students say that they feel that their school is not dangerous place.

**Comments from Dr. Elsie Leak**  
**Director of the Division of School Improvement**  
**North Carolina Department of Education**

Dr. Leak has a long, successful career as an educator; classroom teacher at the elementary, middle, high school, and college levels. She has also been a middle and high school principal and is the former assistant superintendent of educational outcomes for the Durham Public Schools.

**Performance and Growth Standards**

- North Carolina's school accountability program is known as the ABCs of Public Education. The accountability measures are based on end-of-grade (EOG) tests in reading, writing, and math. North Carolina has had a testing program since the late 1980s. A state curriculum has been in place for over a year.
- Every school has two types of standards to reach: a performance standard and a growth standard. The performance standard is the percentage of students who perform at or above the grade level of the EOG tests. The growth standard is the expected growth that can reasonably be achieved over a year by a specific school, based on the school's previous performance and statewide average growth. A formula adopted by the Board of Education is used to calculate expected growth and exemplary growth.
- Exemplary growth occurs when a school exceeds expected growth and performance standards.
- School performance is rewarded through recognition and monetary rewards for teachers if goals are met or exceeded. If a school falls below performance goals assistance teams are assigned to it.

**Awards and Recognition**

- Awards and recognition for each school is based on the level of achievement. The awards include both public recognition through statewide celebrations and incentive payments for teachers.
- A teacher may receive a \$750 bonus when a school meets its expected growth goal and \$1,500 when a school exceeds its goals. A teacher may accept the bonus to spend as he or she chooses, or pool monies with other teachers for school needs. The incentives are funded through the General Assembly.



- Categories of school achievement and the associated awards and recognition are as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Recognition</u>
<b>TOP 25</b> Top 10	Top 25 K-8 schools (statewide) in academic gain Top 10 high schools (statewide) in academic gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banquet</li> <li>Banner</li> <li>Certificate</li> <li>Incentive Award</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
Exemplary	School achieves 10% above expected growth standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate</li> <li>Incentive Award</li> </ul>
Expected	School meets 100% student growth standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate</li> <li>Incentive Award</li> </ul>
Schools of Excellence	At least 90% of school's students are at or above grade level standard and the school meets expected growth standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banquet</li> <li>Banner</li> <li>Certificate</li> <li>Incentive Award</li> </ul>
Schools of Distinction	At least 80% of school's students are at or above grade level standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plaque</li> <li>Certificate</li> </ul>

### Assistance and Sanctions

- Schools which do not reach growth standards established by the State Board of Education's formula are placed in two categories: "Adequate performance" and "low performing."
- A school designated as having "adequate performance" is one which has failed to reach its expected growth standard and has less than or equal to fifty percent of its students below grade level.
- A "low performing" school failed to reach its expected growth standard and has more than fifty percent of its students below grade level.
- A low performing school that falls far below its growth standards, and that has a majority of students considered low performing, is assigned an assistance team by the School Improvement Division to help the school's staff raise student achievement.
- The assistance teams are comprised of local educators, practicing classroom teachers, and a Team Leader administrator. In some cases, retired teachers are part of teams.
- The practicing classroom teachers are recruited and selected in advance, without knowledge of what schools may need assistance. They receive four weeks of training in individual strategies to increase student achievement. Members of the team are trained in teacher performance appraisal.
- Teachers who have performance problems are assigned a coach/mentor. In some cases, recommendations for dismissal may be made to the State Board of Education.

- Those that receive an adequate or above performance review are responsible to the principal. Yearly monitoring takes place.
- If an assistance team is assigned to a school, the Superintendent makes a decision whether principals will remain or not. In some cases, principals are immediately suspended.
- The State Board has the authority to remove local school board members.
- Assistance teams remain with the school for at least one year. With most plans, two years are necessary.

### **School Improvement Plans**

- Every school in North Carolina must submit an individual school improvement plan approved by the local school board and in effect for no longer than three years. Amendments are made as often as necessary.
- The school improvement plan provides the strategies for improving student performance, including timetables, use of state funds, and requests for waivers.

### **Comments of Gary Huggins, Executive Director Education Leadership Council**

#### **General comments about standards**

- Virginia standards have served as a model for states beginning to develop accountability systems;
  - There should be consequences, rewards and incentives for success and failure;
  - We ignore and place limits on educational success (by binding schools to rules and regulations);
  - 19 states have public school choice programs (some are tied to state accountability system);
  - A vibrant charter school movement is very useful in an accountability system;
- Examples of an Innovative Accountability System
- Florida Accountability System-schools have three years to meet the standards or the state Board could bring in a school improvement teams; provide additional funding as long as it is for the school improvement plan; reorganize the school; or parents could send their students to another school within the division.
  - Florida-Opportunity Scholarships-allow parents to send their students, who are attending a school that receives an "F" for two years, to a public school of their choice, a private school of their choice, or a charter school of their choice-unique for a statewide program.
  - Pennsylvania-flexibility is another form of remediation which gives low performing schools flexibility from rules such as contracting for services.

### **Rewarding Success**

- Monetary rewards (bonuses to divisions on a per student basis)
- Freedom to innovate (allow a school to convert to a charter school status; deregulation)
- Recognition (goes a long way)

### **Federal Level Initiatives**

- EdFlex program (did not explain)
- Super EdFlex program-This program is under development at the federal level. The program establishes an agreement between the Secretary of Education and the State on the achievement levels expected in order for the state to receive funding using a noncategorical approach (funding is tied to achievement)
- Title I portability-money travels with the student

### **Overall Conclusion**

- Rewarding with flexibility seems to be working.

### **Roundtable Discussion: Questions and Answers**

**What are your thoughts on teacher accountability in reform efforts? How can we build acceptance within a system we are trying to change?**

You can build acceptance by:

- Engaging teachers in the process in an active way. Maryland uses teachers to score tests from other districts, and this has built support for the testing program.
- Communicating with everyone: business community, teacher groups, parents, administrators' associations. In Texas, these groups provided support when the BOE went to battle for the reform.
- Acquiring professional assistance with communications. Kentucky recommends hiring a public relations firm rather than relying on DOE to build support for such a large effort.
- Listening to what people are saying.
- Mailing communications directly to teachers' homes.
- Continuing what you are doing right. As you move forward to improve the process, make sure teachers are publicly involved.

**The BOE has set the statewide standard for the reform. Should the BOE do more in the development of local school improvement plans by identifying reform models or instructional models that schools should use?**

- The state agency should be the source of best practices in the state.
- Mentor schools can be identified as models that can be visited.
- Profile those schools that are getting the greatest growth in achievement. Describe instructional strategies being used in the schools.
- Disseminate information on recognized national models with information about the demographics each best fits. Match the model to needs identified from test data.

- Some districts do not have the capacity to support improvement. The state should offer help to those districts. Maintaining local control does not mean a district cannot benefit from information on best practices.

#### **What happens when a school is not accredited?**

- Schools in other states have improved and moved off “the list.”
- In Texas, there is a public pronouncement that the school has a failing report card. A monitor goes in to prepare a report on what the problems are and to ask, “Do you want our help?” A Master is put in to oversee the district and give the Commissioner of Education and the BOE some feedback. A Management Team can be put in place to direct decisions. Intervention to take over all operations can occur, but that is rare. Even rarer is the closing of the school.
- Texas offers the option to parents of sending their child to another school in the district when the home school is listed as low-performing. They can send them to another district if the receiving district has openings.

#### **Would you give vouchers to parents of children in low-performing schools?**

Vouchers, like charter schools, can provide an option for poorly performing schools. One plan being considered offers parents the voucher, but any school accepting a voucher must participate in the state’s assessment/accountability program.

#### **What are incentives that have worked successfully to encourage performance?**

- The desire not to be on the low-performing list can be the greatest motivator to the teachers in a school.
- Teachers in North Carolina indicated that rather than receiving a bonus to work with low-performing students, they wanted a smaller class size and a classroom equipped like the best classrooms in the state.
- Bringing in the best teachers to work in a low-performing school is desirable. If you have to pay them an additional \$10,000 to work in that school, it’s the way to get the job done.
- Teacher ladders in Texas did not work.
- There is some belief that increasing pay, especially to middle-agers who are concerned about retirement, is the only way to encourage strong teachers to move to low-performing schools.
- In high-performing schools, teachers seek employment because they like being associated with a winner.
- In Texas, exemplary schools receive a monetary reward.
- The Texas BOE has relinquished state regulation to exemplary schools such that the state’s oversight is limited to civil rights, American with Disabilities Act, and public health and safety. Other state requirements, such as class size limits, do not apply to a school that remains exemplary.
- For high performing schools, money is secondary to recognition as an incentive.
- You can affect the behavior of teachers in schools by small incentives that are meaningful to them.

### **Have you heard parents complaining about the testing?**

- Yes, you will always hear complaints that the test is too long or too hard or making children and teachers sick. You must do what you think is best for students and stay the course. Hold your chin up and be proud of your efforts because you'll sleep much better three or four years from now.
- You'll hear parents say they you're narrowing the curriculum and teaching to the test. You must continue to monitor your performance on both the SOL test and the NAEP test because they measure content differently. If you can show that the NAEP scores go up as the SOL scores increase, then you know you are not narrowing the curriculum. If NAEP goes down as SOLs go up, however, you would have a disconnect that the BOE would need to address.

### **How do we tie in business to this effort?**

- The BOE must sell the reform to business—telling them that this is good. Let them know that we will get better than the first testing results.

### **Final words of advice . . .**

- While most people are up to the task of changing, some are not. Have the courage to take action.
- You need the courage to stay the course.
- Stay the course without compromise on the standards and consequences tied to them. Use flexibility as a reward.
- Utilize the Virginia Business Council.
- Market—have a good communications strategy.
- Engage teachers actively in becoming part of the group who advocates for this program and understands this effort.
- Incentives are important.
- Look at alternatives to the testing for schools and students who are doing very well.
- Challenge high-performing students.
- Be prepared to assist those who can't reach the standards.
- Reward growth and absolute performance.
- Stay focused.
- Get parents involved.

### **Closing Comments from Mr. Schroder**

- Mr. Schroder thanked the participants at the meeting for helping the Board learn and understand what is happening across the country as states work to improve schools. Virginia, like other states, has many challenges ahead, but also has many outstanding programs of which we can be very proud.
- Mr. Schroder closed the meeting by stating his firm belief that the Board of Education is headed in the right direction in its efforts to improve schools. There may be adjustments needed as the program progresses; the Board will continue to listen and work in partnership with parents, teachers, educators, and other citizens, we can make this program work. This

session is a part of that listening and learning effort on the part of the Board to make the right decisions on the tough and complex issues it will deal with over the next year.

The Board recessed at 2:40 p.m. and reconvened at 4:00 p.m. at the Best Western Cavalier Inn.

### ***CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF RETREAT ITEMS***

Mrs. Diane Atkinson, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Public Affairs at the Department of Education discussed the following document with Board members: Board of Education Timeline (calendar). The calendar lists items that each division within the Department expects to bring before the Board in the coming year.

Mrs. Atkinson also provided a document (Appendix A) for Board members that describes the new sets of regulations and revisions to existing regulations the Board is expected to consider. Most of these regulatory items are in response to changes in state and federal laws. The document also includes other items that each division within the Department expects to bring before the Board in the coming year. These items include guidelines for local school divisions, studies that have been requested by the General Assembly, and other issues for the Board's consideration.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Patterson said that Mr. Schroder, Mr. Stapleton and the Department staff deserve a great deal of thanks for the outstanding program presented during the Board's Retreat.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

There being no further business, Mr. Schroder adjourned the meeting of the Virginia Board of Education and the Board of Vocational Education at 5:50 p.m.

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President

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Secretary of the Board